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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 001695

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SUBJECT: AF DAS THOMPSON'S MFA DISCUSSIONS ON ZIMBABWE,  
SOUTH AFRICA, AND PUBLIC HEALTH OUTREACH

REF: A. PARIS 849 B. PARIS 1104 C. PARIS 847

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Josiah B. Rosenblatt. Reas  
ons 1.4b,d

¶1. (C) Summary: AF DAS Carol Thompson pushed for active engagement on Zimbabwe and mapped out USG public health initiatives in Africa, e.g. PEPFAR and the President's Malaria initiative, in a meeting with MFA AF A/S-Equivalent Jean de Gliniasty. Gliniasty called for letting Africans take the lead on Mugabe. He favored discreet pressure that would not cause Africans to close ranks against Western critics. He noted with encouragement the protests by South African trade unions against complacency toward Mugabe. Gliniasty expressed puzzlement at South African diplomacy, especially their assertiveness in the UNSC. End Summary.

¶2. (C) In a March 26 meeting with French MFA AF A/S Equivalent Jean de Gliniasty and AF DAS-Equivalent for southern African Jean-Claude Brunet, AF DAS Carol Thompson urged active engagement on the problem of Zimbabwe, especially in outreach to SADC member states. DAS Thompson also emphasized to Gliniasty that the U.S. hoped Mugabe would not be invited to the 2007 EU-Africa Summit. Gliniasty commented African attitudes toward Mugabe were changing dramatically. Whereas a year ago Africans had closed ranks around Mugabe and stridently repulsed criticisms, there now was a marked softening in tone. Although the GoF had worried that excluding Mugabe from the 2007 Africa-France Summit in Cannes would trigger a boycott, in the end only South Africa and Tanzania stayed away because of Mugabe's absence, Gliniasty said (Ref A). President Kikwete had canceled his attendance 48 hours before the opening of the panel he was set to chair in Cannes.

¶3. (C) African leaders were now beginning to engage on both Zimbabwe and on Sudan, Gliniasty offered. African opposition to Sudan's efforts to head the African Union was a watershed, he thought. Nonetheless, Gliniasty suggested that Western pressure was often more effective with Africans when it remained discreet. Too large a Western footprint in opposing Mugabe could cause Africans to close ranks (Ref B). DAS Thompson called attention to Zambian criticism of Mugabe. She agreed it was important to support efforts by Tanzanian President Kikwete; however, Western pressure on Mugabe had to be maintained, she emphasized. Gliniasty noted Mugabe, as a hardened, "calcified, old man," seemed inured to criticism; DAS Thompson countered with a call to keep the heat on Mugabe's circle. Gliniasty replied that such pressure might equally provide the old guard with a pretext to repress younger reformers. That said, Gliniasty admitted pressure was

necessary, if only to placate public opinion. He thought the protests by South African trade unions against Pretoria's tolerance toward Mugabe were remarkable and could constitute a possible sea-change.

#### South Africa: Acting like a Permanent Member

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14. (C) Gliniasty expressed puzzlement at the assertive diplomacy of South Africa. The South African UNSC delegation showed no fear of isolation and appeared to have a view on every conceivable topic. Pretoria, in short, was already behaving at the UNSC like a permanent member. Commenting on French and South African divergences on how to address Cote d'Ivoire at the UNSC, Gliniasty noted that Pretoria, while it had an outright different analysis of the situation, had held to the line, like France, on the need for transparent democratic elections. Gliniasty, admittedly bemused, thought FM Zuma's inexperience contributed to sporadic South African missteps. DAS Thompson commented that South African opposition to Bashir's AU candidacy had been encouraging, a key moment. South Africa was an African bellwether with important potential for leadership.

#### UNITAID and Public Health Initiatives

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15. (C) After DAS Thompson explained the essential focus on public health in USG policy in Africa, notably through PEPFAR and the President's Malaria Fund, Gliniasty spoke about the UNITAID initiative pushed by President Chirac, which raises funds for countering HIV/AIDS through a levy on international airline travel. Gliniasty regretted that

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Chirac's manner of promoting UNITAID during the Africa-France Summit (Ref C) had seemed to incite international competition for and about fundraising; this was a distraction from the larger story of general agreement on how best to focus public health efforts. Gliniasty homed in on fostering sustainable networks for drug distribution, rather than simply pushing for drug availability. DAS Thompson commented that it was important to empower a broad range of persons, including midwives, who could serve as health providers; she noted how treatment efforts were hampered in some countries by limiting simple practices, such as drawing blood, to doctors alone, who were generally far too few in number.

16. (C) Gliniasty, who represented France in Dakar from 1999-2003, observed that the relatively low incidence of HIV/AIDS in Senegal stemmed in part from the traditional mores of a Sahelian, Islamic society; from positive cooperation on prevention between Christian and Muslim clergy; from a health apparatus that, for all its faults, was relatively adept at distribution of medicines; and even, if indirectly, from Senegal's rudimentary infrastructure -- the lack of highways meant reduced circulation and thus fewer opportunities for virus transmission. There was an uptick, however, associated with infected Senegalese personnel returning after deployment in UN missions outside the country, he offered. DAS Thompson stated that Angola, with its low prevalence of HIV/AIDS, was also a case to watch. Ambitious infrastructure improvements, notably highways, could give a boost to trucking and sex trafficking, thereby increasing viral transmission.

17. (C) Gliniasty noted there was an ongoing internal debate about whether or not the Agence Francaise du Developpement (AFD) should apply funds to tackle HIV/AIDS. Some in France, noting the plethora of other global agencies and endeavors dedicated to HIV/AIDS, argued that AFD would do best to focus exclusively on development and infrastructure.

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